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Tom Weiss

THE RED BATTLE FLYER

Manfred von Richthofen

The Red Battle Flyer

The Red Battle Flyer

by Captain Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen (1892-1918)
translated by T. Ellis Baker

Manfred Albrecht Freiherr von Richthofen, also widely known as the Red Baron, was a German fighter pilot with the Imperial German Army Air Service during World War I. He is considered the top ace of that war, being officially credited with 80 air combat victories.

Originally a cavalryman, Richthofen transferred to the Air Service in 1915, becoming one of the first members of Jasta 2 in 1916. He quickly distinguished himself as a fighter pilot, and during 1917 became leader of Jasta 11 and then the larger unit Jagdgeschwader 1 (better known as the "Flying Circus"). By 1918, he was regarded as a national hero in Germany, and was very well known by the other side.

Richthofen was shot down and killed near Amiens on 21 April 1918. There has been considerable discussion regarding aspects of his career, especially the circumstances of his death. He remains perhaps the most widely known fighter pilot of all time. This recording is a short autobiography of Manfred von Richthofen.

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Read by Tom Weiss

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